

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 110055
ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/EGY:D E ZWEIFEL:LB

APPROVED BY NEA:H H SAUNDERS

NEA:N A VELIOTES

S/S; SVALERGA

-----119016 292253Z /66

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY CAIRO NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

USLO RIYADH IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 110055

EXDIS

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: MASS, EG, US, SA, IS

SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR'S REACTION TO PRESENTATION
OF PROPOSED AIRCRAFT SALES

REFERENCE: CAIRO 11890

1. EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR GHORBAL CALLED ON ASSISTANT SECRETARY SAUNDERS APRIL 28. SINCE FORMAL PROPOSALS RE AIRCRAFT SALES THEN BEING SENT TO THE HILL, MAJOR PART OF DISCUSSION FOCUSED ON THAT SUBJECT.

2. GHORBAL EXPRESSED DEEP CONCERN OVER WHAT HE PERCEIVED TO BE A "BACKING OFF" BY ADMINISTRATION ON COMMITMENT TO SALES. SAUNDERS REASSURED HIM THAT THIS WAS NOT SO, AND
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THAT ADMINISTRATION REMAINS FIRMLY COMMITTED TO EACH OF THE FOUR PROPOSED SALES. LETTER TO SENATOR CHURCH (STATE 109614) WAS AN EFFORT TO OVERCOME SENSITIVE PROCEDURAL ISSUE CONCERNING CONGRESSIONAL PREROGATIVES. INCREASINGLY OVER PAST FEW DAYS, MATTER OF WHETHER OR NOT CONGRESS IS ENTITLED TO EXAMINE EACH SALE SEPARATELY ON ITS OWN MERITS HAD THREATENED TO BECOME AN ISSUE WITH A LIFE OF ITS OWN,

DETRACTING FROM MORE RELEVANT FACTORS WHICH SHOULD BE FOCUS FOR CONGRESSIONAL CONSIDERATIONS. ACCORDINGLY, ADMINISTRATION HAD MADE DECISION TO DEFUSE THAT ISSUE BY MAKING CLEAR

THAT CONGRESS INDEED HAS RESPONSIBILITY TO CONSIDER SEPARATE PROPOSALS. ALTHOUGH CHURCH LETTER MIGHT BE INTERPRETED BY MEDIA AS ALTERING "PACKAGE" CONCEPT, FACT IS THAT PRESIDENT WILL RESERVE JUDGMENT ON HOW TO PROCEED AFTER CONGRESS HAS COMPLETED DELIBERATIONS ON PROPOSED SALES. ADMINISTRATION HAS MADE CLEAR THAT IN ADDITION TO REVIEW OF INDIVIDUAL PROPOSED SALES, CONGRESS SHOULD CONSIDER HOW FOUR SALES RELATE TO EACH OTHER AND TO OVERALL SITUATION IN THE AREA.

3. GHORBAL REPEATEDLY RETURNED TO CONTENTION THAT MANNER IN WHICH PROPOSALS SENT FORWARD WILL BE INTERPRETED AS A SOFTENING OF PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATION DETERMINATION TO WITHDRAW ALL PROPOSED SALES IF ANY ONE OF THEM REJECTED. HE OPINED THAT "CHANGE" IN OUR POSITION WOULD BE INTERPRETED AS RESULT OF DAYAN'S PRESENCE IN U.S.

4. SAUNDERS, NOTING GHORBAL'S DETAILED KNOWLEDGE OF WASHINGTON POLITICS, EXPRESSED HOPE THAT EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR WOULD ENCOURAGE HIS ARAB COLLEAGUES TO TAKE REASONED VIEW OF ADMINISTRATION'S OBJECTIVES IN MANNER IN WHICH PROPOSED SALES PRESENTED TO CONGRESS. GHORBAL UNDERSTOOD
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ISSUE AND IMPLICATIONS, BUT LEFT IN RATHER GLOOMY MOOD CONCERNING PROSPECTS OF TACTICS WHICH MIGHT BE EMPLOYED BY THOSE WHO OPPOSE SALES, PARTICULARLY RE SAUDI ARABIA AIRCRAFT (HE WAS LESS CONCERNED ABOUT F-5 SALE TO EGYPT, BASED IN PART ON HIS OWN EXTENSIVE EFFORTS ON HILL.)

5. WE APPRECIATE MANNER IN WHICH YOU BROACHED SUBJECT WITH MUBARAK (REFTEL). OBVIOUSLY, BOTH HERE AND IN CAIRO WE WILL HAVE TO MAKE CONTINUING EFFORTS TO KEEP EGYPTIANS FROM REACTING NEGATIVELY TO EACH CONGRESSIONAL MANEUVER OR CRITICISM RE PROPOSED SALES TO ARABS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FIGHTER AIRCRAFT, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, MILITARY SALES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 29 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE110055
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: D E ZWEIFEL:LB
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780184-0654
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t1978041/aaaaaakw.tel
Line Count: 106
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 9437b2a5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 78 CAIRO 11890
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 aug 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2812450
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR'S REACTION TO PRESENTATION OF PROPOSED AIRCRAFT SALES
TAGS: MASS, EG, US, SA, IS, (GHORBAL, ASHRAF A), (SAUNDERS, HAROLD)
To: CAIRO
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/9437b2a5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014